

Questionnaire and Comment Form

Southwest Gulf Railroad Company's
Proposed Rail Construction in Medina County, TX
STB Finance Docket No. 34284

June 12, 2003

This questionnaire and comment form is designed to help you identify and describe any issues of interest to you regarding Southwest Gulf Railroad Company's Proposed Rail Construction in Medina County, TX. Your comments will help the Surface Transportation Board, Section of Environmental Analysis understand public interests and concerns about the project as we conduct our environmental review.

Please complete this questionnaire after you have reviewed the exhibits. If you have a concern about a particular geographic area, please circle it on the attached map.

Please give us the completed form tonight or mail it to:

Attn: FD 34284
Rini Ghosh
Attorney-Adviser
Section of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, N.W., Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

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note circles in red
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Your name and address are optional, but would be useful if you would like to be added to our mailing list to receive subsequent information regarding this project.

Name: LESTER R. LANDRUM

Address: 776 CR 354

City, State, Zip: HONDO, TEXAS 78861

Telephone: 830-426 8295

1. Which of the following applies to your situation?

☒ The proposed rail line is near my home.

☐ The proposed rail line is near my business.

☐ The proposed rail line crosses my property

☒ Other, please specify THE QUARRY WILL BE NEAR MY HOME,

2. What are your concerns regarding potential environmental impacts and do you have any mitigation suggestions?

SEE ATTACHMENT

3. Please use this space for additional comments or suggestions.

Thank you for your comments.

June 12, 2003 Public Open House Proposed Rail Construction

I have the following concerns and questions that were not included to my questionnaire and comment form on June 12, 2003.

Questionnaires of this form do not exchange complete, accurate, and total meaningful dialog, and as a result I was disappointed with the past meeting. The facts sheet was not complete and could produce less than accurate meanings in many cases. Many major and controlling issues were omitted on the facts sheet. I hope that this approach is not a ploy to keep opposition to a minimum, keep those in favor less than fully informed, and known problems suppressed. I believe other meetings or a canvas of the area should be held to better accumulate concerns. It appears that a complete quarry design with exact equipment, exact quantities, and specific procedures is needed to evaluate, compare, study and judge.

Safety and Health: What do you expect the average speed of the train to be as it enters or exits the quarry at CR 353? It seems to me that the trains would be slowing on entering at grade preparing to be halted and it seems to me the trains on exiting would be slow to accelerate as they would be loaded with a standing start. If these entry-exit trains were traveling at only 2 mph then CR 353 would be blocked for 120 minutes each day. Will these trains operate on a 24 hour/day basis? Will any of these rails outside the quarry be used to marshal trains? Will population expansions be considered on this project and will future limestone demands be considered on this project? What is the absolute maximum rate to be mined at any time in the quarry life? Could future times require eight trains per day? Will economics speed up production and reduce quarry life? How much exposure to accidents do we have with only passive warning devices on proposed road crossings? The added 160 gravel trucks each day will add to the clogs.

Land Use: It would appear that the majority of land in and around this rail line would go down in value. If you consider that this effected area could be two miles wide, and ten miles long it would include 12,800 acres and a property value decrease of only \$200 per acre would result in \$2,560,000 loss to these land owners. Have other methods to convey this limestone been addressed? The "no-build" alternative may or may not require trucks. Could a slurry pipe line or covered conveyors be used and be more desireable? It appears that studies should be as intense and complete as the Alaskan pipe line. Where will rail cars and trains be stored for the remaining 115 days of the year? My circled map is attached.

Water Resources: Addressed in my questionnaire turned in at meeting.

Wetlands: SGR route alternatives are not accurately described in the facts sheet. Note that SGR stated "has identified a proposed route that, although not the shorter, avoids environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands". According to 40 CFR Part 230.41, "those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions, (a) generally including swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas". No alternate avoids the wetlands. The "no build" alternate appears to be the least objectionable to the wetlands.

Biological Resources: Please note the impact of deer, turkey, dove, quail, and ferrel hogs as

hunting is a money crop to much of this area. Exotic game is also raised in the area.

Air Quality: The very dusty product of limestone in rail cars will impact air quality and will add to the cumulative effect of the quarry and others. Any air quality models should include the Mexico farmer fires in the spring, ozone alert effect in all adjacent counties, and auto emission testing on adjacent counties. Does Texas also have plans to reduce diesel fuel sulfur standards? Will quarry emission be added the cumulative results?


Noise: The cumulative noises related from expanded quarrying, added common carrier customers, and population expansion should be studied. Note that this noise level should also be adjusted for winter north winds, prevailing southeast winds, and temperature changes. Quarry equipment should be numerated for noise survey. Sometimes old and used equipment could be used at the quarry.. Would this type equipment be protected with grandfather clauses? Quarry explosions do add to noise input as do whistles, bells, warning signals. Quarry loaders, haul trucks, conveyors, crushers, etc. all add to noise. With certain weather conditions I can sit on my fornt porch and hear trains near Dunlay some 7-8 miles away. It appears that a complete quarry design with exact equipment, exact quantities, and specific procedures is needed to evaluate the cumulative effects.

Transportation: Please note that one proposed route crosses CR 353 twice in a distance of about two miles. The FM 2676 is the major and only artery from this area. We cannot afford long trains at slow speeds to block this road with a grade crossing. Also note that proposed train times or durations are not set, and no future expansion estimates were added. Note that traffic to CR 354 would have increases and this road has three cattle guards with some 1.25-1.75 miles of open range. All comments cannot be formulated as the total quarry design and quarry operation procedures and philosophies are not presented.

Recreational Resources: Also see Biological Resources. It appears that the blasting and train noise could directly effect at least 20-40 square miles of deer, turkey, dove, and quail habitat.

Social and Economics Effects: I am aware of some \$500,000 of family home developments that have either been put on hold or cancelled due to the rail and quarry. I am also aware of one plan for 30-40 plats of 3-6 acres each that has been put in limbo. I am aware of one large sales contract that was voided by the buyer as the real estate salesman did not give disclosure of the pending rail and quarry. Mr. Jack Love at Mico Realty, Mico, Texas, (830)612-2245 can account many more exact real estate effects. I believe the local home plus property value would decrease some 2.5-5.0 million dollars over an effected area of only 20-30 square miles around the railroad.

Conclusion: Full public hearings and complete widely publicized information is needed. Our pending problems cannot and will not be properly addressed on a project unless this is done. Please supply additional design information as it is available . We are grateful for governmental agencies and their representatives with stamina, strength, knowledge, and foresight to spearhead our concerns and our rights.

Respectfully,

Lester Landrum

776 CR 354 Hondo ,TX78861 (830)426-8295

